

HOUSE RESOLUTION 96
By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to create a special committee to study the feasibility of local education agencies hiring additional social workers.

WHEREAS, school social workers bring a unique, professional knowledge and skill to the school system, in that they address certain societal issues that burden pupils and thus affect the students' performance in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, as they are a bridge between community and family, school social workers assess and intervene with at-risk students, acknowledging the importance of nonacademic factors within a child's life, and thus helping to resolve those issues that prohibit success in learning, adjustment, and growth; and

WHEREAS, as the emphasis on the importance of education grows within our society, and as we strive to improve Tennessee's educational system, this General Assembly recognizes the worthy contributions of the school social worker as being the vital link and resource for intervention and prevention strategies; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that there is hereby created

a special committee to study the feasibility of authorizing certain local education agencies (LEAs) to apply for certain hardship grants in order to increase the number of school social workers in LEAs where:

1. The percentage of the local education agency's (LEA's) students, who receive free or reduced price school lunches, ranks consistently and substantially above the statewide LEA average; and
2. The percentage of the LEA's schools, on notice or probation pursuant to § 49-1-602, ranks consistently and substantially above the statewide LEA average; and
3. A LEA consistently utilizes its basic education program (BEP) funding to maintain a ratio of at least one (1) school social worker per two thousand (2,000) average daily membership.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the committee shall consist of five (5) members, who shall be appointed to serve by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Not more than three (3) members of the House of Representatives shall serve, with two (2) of those members being specially qualified to serve on the commission by virtue of education, training, or experience, particularly one (1) member of the House of Representatives who holds a degree in social work and one (1) member of the House of Representatives who represents a district containing a LEA on probation and who also holds a degree in education. One (1) member from the Kindergarten-Grade 12 Subcommittee of the House Education Committee shall also serve on the special committee, along with two (2) designees from the Department of Education who have knowledge concerning this area of expertise: one (1) designee with expertise in social work and one (1) designee with expertise in the Basic Education Program (BEP).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all appropriate state agencies shall provide assistance to the special committee upon request of the chair.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all legislative members of the special committee who are duly elected members of the General Assembly shall remain members of such committee until the committee reports its findings and recommendations to the General Assembly.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall be convened by the member with the most years of continuous service in the General Assembly; and at its first meeting shall elect a chair, vice chair, and such other officers the committee deems necessary.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the special committee shall timely report its findings and recommendations, including any proposed legislation or interim reports, to the House Education Committee of the One Hundred Third General Assembly, no later than February 1, 2004, at which time the committee shall cease to exist.